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- Memorandum for the Intelligence Advisory  
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(5 July 1955)
- Status of Foreign Intelligence Programs -  
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

16 August 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Executive Secretary,  
The National Security Council

SUBJECT : Status of the Foreign Intelligence Program

1. This report has been prepared pursuant to Presidential directive as forwarded to the Director of Central Intelligence by the Executive Secretary, National Security Council, by memorandum dated 1 July 1955. Primary reference has been made to national security policy objectives applicable to the intelligence community as set forth in NSC 5501.

2. The intelligence community was recently investigated by the Clark Task Force of the Hoover Commission. The findings of the Commission, which are presently under advisement, are not covered or commented on in this report. The comments of the organizations reported on are being transmitted separately to the White House in accordance with customary procedure.

3. This report was concurred in by the Intelligence Advisory Committee on 16 August 1955.

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ALLEN W. DULLES  
Director

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
ON THE STATUS OF THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE  
PROGRAM AS OF 30 JUNE 1955

SUMMARY

Evaluation of US Capabilities to Provide Warning of Attack

We believe, as we did at the time of our previous report, that the US could expect possibly as much as six months and not less than 30 days warning of Soviet preparation for full-scale land, sea, and air attack, providing that the Soviets went to full, or nearly full mobilization prior to the attack.

The current estimate of the growing air capabilities of the USSR has made us somewhat more pessimistic than we were last year regarding our ability to give advance intelligence warning of surprise air attack. Should the USSR attempt a major surprise air attack against the US from forward bases in 1955, the preparations might be detected, and if they were, would provide a generalized degree of warning of several days, and specific warning of unusual and possibly threatening air activity on the order of 18-24 hours. A lesser scale of attack, involving about 250 aircraft, if accompanied by an extraordinary security effort could be launched as early as 1955 with no assurance of specific advance warning to US intelligence (apart from that provided by early warning radar). Attacks against US bases or forces overseas, or against US allies, could be made with equal or greater likelihood of being accomplished without advance warning.

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In the period between now and 1958, Soviet capabilities for surprise attacks will almost certainly increase. Furthermore, the USSR will have a progressively increasing capability for launching attacks on the US from interior Soviet bases. Such a method of attack would probably provide no specific advance warning to US intelligence.

The USAF now operates world-wide on a 24-hour basis an Indications System for detecting imminent Communist attacks, especially air attack with nuclear weapons. Major air commands have subsidiary centers tied in with Washington by preferential use channels of communication for flash transmission of early warning intelligence. This system is in turn tied in with the unified command indications centers and with the National Indications Center in Washington, which is maintained on a 24-hour basis by the Watch Committee of the IAC.

#### Evaluation of Soviet Capabilities and Intentions

Intelligence to support over-all assessments of the strengths of the USSR, Communist China, and the Satellites is generally improving. The general limitations of intelligence on the USSR are evident in the process of attempting to measure the forces shaping Soviet policy. We can illuminate the broad outlines of the chief problems confronting Soviet leadership, but we are still unable to determine the degree to which these problems, such as allocation of Soviet economic resources and German rearmament, generate pressures on Soviet policy. The main questions of political intelligence often involve matters of judgment on which little or no factual evidence can be brought to bear -- the degree of independence enjoyed by Communist China in matters of major policy, the degree of likelihood that the USSR will withdraw from East Germany, the likelihood of open intervention by the USSR in hostilities between the US and Communist China which threatened the existence of the latter.

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We have made progress in economic intelligence on the USSR, most notably in improving techniques for measuring economic growth. However, there remains the basic problem, that of determining the extent to which the Soviet economy is capable of meeting the competing claims for resources arising from the various internal and external commitments of Soviet policy. In an effort to find some solution to this problem, we have recently focused attention on a particularly difficult aspect of intelligence on Soviet resources allocation, the estimated economic cost of the over-all Soviet military effort.

New techniques for acquiring and analyzing data have advanced our knowledge of Soviet scientific and technological capabilities. Progress has been made in intelligence on Soviet development of guided missiles and electronic equipment, and on the Soviet nuclear program. Despite advances in these and other fields, important questions such as the characteristics of various guided missiles, the existence and nature of a Soviet biological warfare program, and the apportionment of nuclear material among various types of weapons and systems, remain to be answered.

Although we have succeeded in collecting much information on the separate branches of the Soviet armed forces, we have yet to construct the picture of probable Soviet strategy so essential to estimating general trends in the Soviet military establishment, probable Soviet choices in weapons systems, or the strength of particular military components. The requirement for such estimates is particularly urgent at the present time because of recent indications that Soviet military thinking is adjusting to the impact of modern military technology.

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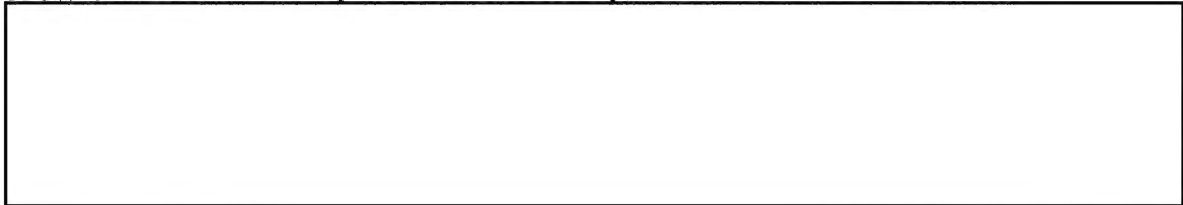
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Collection

In most respects there has been little over-all change in our collection capabilities within the Bloc, largely because of the continued strict enforcement of Sino-Soviet security and counterintelligence measures. However, there has been a considerable improvement in the collection of intelligence data through technological means such as ELINT, together with increasing use of aerial reconnaissance. Evacuation of US forces from Austria will deprive the military services of a significant

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ANNUAL REPORT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
ON THE STATUS OF THE FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE  
PROGRAM AS OF 30 JUNE 1955

REPORT

A. WARNING OF ATTACK

1. Evaluation of US Capabilities

a. We believe, as we did at the time of our previous report, that the US could expect possibly as much as six months and not less than 30 days warning of Soviet preparation for full-scale land, sea, and air attack, providing that the Soviets went to full, or nearly full mobilization prior to the attack.

b. The current estimate of the growing air capabilities of the USSR has made us somewhat more pessimistic than we were last year regarding our ability to give advance intelligence warning of surprise air attack. Should the USSR attempt a major surprise air attack against the US from forward bases in 1955, the preparations might be detected, and if they were, would provide a generalized degree of warning of several days, and specific warning of unusual and possibly threatening air activity on the order of 18-24 hours. A lesser scale of attack, involving about 250 aircraft, if accompanied by an extraordinary security effort could be launched as early as 1955 with no assurance of specific advance warning to US intelligence (apart from that provided by early warning radar). Attacks against US bases or forces overseas, or against US allies, could be made with equal or greater likelihood of being accomplished without advance warning.

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c. In the period between now and 1958, Soviet capabilities for surprise attacks will almost certainly increase. Furthermore, the USSR will have a progressively increasing capability for launching attacks on the US from interior Soviet bases. Such a method of attack would probably provide no specific advance warning to US intelligence.

2. The Watch Committee of the IAC

The Watch Committee and its permanent staff, the National Indications Center, moved in January to new and more suitable quarters in the Pentagon. In addition to its continued concentration on detecting indications of possible attacks on the US, its possessions and overseas bases, a major focus of the Watch Committee's attention during recent months has been the situation in the Formosa Straits area. In dealing with the development of that situation, the Watch Committee has improved its techniques, including the compilation and dissemination to the intelligence community and to overseas commands of an indicator list specifically responsive to the Offshore Islands situation.

3. Formosa Straits Coverage

a. In response to the President's desire for coordinated intelligence coverage of the Formosa Straits problem, the IAC established an ad hoc Current Intelligence Group on the Formosa Straits. This Group issued daily reports from 21 March to 6 May, and now issues weekly reports supplemented by such special reports as events require.

b. In the field, the marked expansion of the Formosa Liaison Center has resulted in improved intelligence coverage.

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4. USAF Indications Center

The Air Force has activated, and now operates world-wide on a 24-hour basis, an Indications System keyed to the detection of imminent Soviet/Communist attacks, especially air attack with nuclear weapons. The Air Defense Command, Alaskan Air Command, Far East Air Command, Northeast Air Command and USAF Europe, all have subsidiary indications centers tied in with the Unified commands system and with Washington by preferential use channels of communication for flash transmission of early warning intelligence. This system is tied in with the National Indications Center referred to in para. 2 above.

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6. SHAPE Request for Indications Intelligence

We have noted an increase in the requests from SHAPE for intelligence which could be made available to all National Member representatives. The IAC now has before it a request for intelligence on indications of Soviet military aggression. While the policy of the IAC on release of intelligence to SHAPE, because of the multi-nationalities problem, has been cautious (though more liberal with respect to the Standing Group), we of course make available to General Gruenther and his US staff officers any intelligence of use to them.

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## B. EVALUATION AND ESTIMATES

### 1. National Intelligence Estimates (NIE)

a. The NSC reaffirmed, with procedural changes, its directive for producing "net evaluations" of the capabilities of the USSR to inflict direct injury on the continental US and key US installations overseas. For the pending study, scheduled to go to the NSC on 1 October 1955, the IAC has produced several estimates keyed to the focal period of mid-1958. These have included "Soviet Gross Capabilities for Attacks on the US and Key Overseas Installations Through Mid-1958," and "Probable Intelligence Warning of Soviet Attack on the US Through Mid-1958."

b. Intelligence support was also rendered to the NSC on other topics, and of the 30 NIE's published during the last six months, 19 were related to specific NSC papers or policy decisions (compared to 16 of the 24 published during the preceding six months).

c. Special estimates are in process in support of the work of the Special Assistant to the President for Disarmament.

d. The IAC is now surveying the use to which recipients are putting NIE's, in order to determine how these estimates can be made more useful to policy makers.

### 2. National Intelligence Surveys (NIS)

Since the start of the NIS Program in 1948, over 2,700 sections have been produced on 87 foreign countries and areas. This represents over one half of the total world coverage, most of which has been on JCS high priority areas. The goal of 8 equivalent

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NIS per year established for the program was attained and it is expected that this rate of production will continue. New elements are being produced in accordance with revised interagency requirements for biographic intelligence and for psychological warfare and the United States Information Agency programs. There has been improvement during the past year in the collection effort in support of NIS.

3. Military Intelligence

a. We can report no appreciable change in the status of military intelligence as described in our last report (NSC 5509, Part 7). Military intelligence to support broad assessments of the military, logistical, and related industrial and government control strengths of the USSR, Communist China, and the Satellites is generally improving.

b. Nevertheless, information in many critical fields is not adequate, qualitatively or quantitatively, to meet the requirements of the military planners for a firm intelligence basis for the formulation of military plans, the calculation of risks, the conduct of military operations, the development of material, the orientation of research, and the allocation of resources.

c. Within the last six months improvements have been made in certain limited categories of military information on the Sino-Soviet Bloc. These have included gains in (a) our knowledge of Soviet postwar modifications of tactical doctrine for regiments and battalions, as a result of acquisition of Soviet Field Service Regulations, dated 1953; (b) the degree of reliability and accuracy of Chinese Communist order of battle; and (c) our knowledge of the pattern and scope of the Soviet program for modernizing ground weapons, to the extent that such weapons have been issued to troops in Germany and Austria. This last development has also made possible some confirmation of existing estimates on the production of weapons.

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d. The Sino-Soviet Bloc continues to exercise the most stringent of security measures. This has steadily reduced overt access to military information and has limited clandestine penetration operations to marginal successes. Accordingly, we are intensifying our clandestine program for the collection of military intelligence on the Sino-Soviet Bloc. Of even more importance, considerably greater attention is being given to the development of scientific and technical equipment and methods as a potentially promising means for overcoming security measures in target areas.

e. In view of the basic nature of the obstacles confronted an expanded program must be operated over a long period of time before a significant reduction in our critical deficiencies is in sight.

f. There has been considerable progress toward the attainment of the minimal requirements for air target materials in support of joint war plans. Predicated on present target assignments and production capabilities, these minimal requirements are scheduled for completion by the end of calendar year 1955. However, full requirements for target materials are still incomplete for a considerable number of those joint war plan targets assigned for destruction by the Unified and Specified Commanders. Target materials for all-weather coverage on presently assigned joint war plan targets are scheduled for completion by the end of calendar year 1956. The foregoing is without reference to targets not presently assigned for destruction.

#### 4. Political Intelligence

a. Resources and capabilities for production of political intelligence on the Sino-Soviet Bloc remain unchanged and continue to make possible a reasonably accurate interpretation of political developments.

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b. The program for analyzing problems of the under-developed areas in the free world continues as a major focus of attention, together with the study of vulnerabilities in those areas to Communist infiltration and other action. Negotiations are in progress between State and CIA to strengthen the production of intelligence on international Communism. We have also concentrated on attitudes and reactions in the free world to the development of nuclear weapons, with increasing emphasis upon the

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c. State, Defense, OCB, and USIA have joined with CIA in an interagency committee (Social Science Research Group) to coordinate external research projects relating to the fields of psychological and unconventional warfare.

5. Economic Intelligence

a. There has been continued improvement in our intelligence on the economy of the Sino-Soviet Bloc. This improvement has been primarily in research and analysis, but also in collection. Useful advances have been made in techniques for the study of long-run Soviet economic growth and for estimate of Bloc capabilities. Increasing emphasis is being given to the costing and economic evaluation of individual Soviet military programs, including guided missiles and air defense programs; and to Soviet defense expenditures. However, important gaps continue to exist in data on industries and products which are closely identified with priority military uses. Attempts are

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being made to correct inadequacies in data and methods for analyzing Soviet agricultural capabilities and their implications, Bloc consumer goods production, Soviet economic penetration of underdeveloped areas, and other economic fields of national intelligence interest. The coordination effort in the field of economic intelligence under NSCID 15/1 has been particularly noteworthy in recent months.

b. Special attention had been given to the analysis of the nature and importance of Sino-Soviet relationships to the economic growth potential of Communist China. Outputs of certain basic industries are reasonably well established but more information and expanded research are required on over-all consumption and on agricultural and transportation capabilities.

c. Economic intelligence continues to support the US program for underdeveloped areas. It has given extensive support to the President's program for peaceful uses of atomic energy.

d. Substantial assistance was given to the United States delegation to COCOM by the intelligence community during the international review of trade control lists in Paris, and intelligence support was also provided in preparation for negotiations on major commodity problems that have arisen during the past year. Acceleration in the effort to improve enforcement of economic defense measures requires improved collection of information on trade control violations and increased analysis of trade and financial transactions. The completion of an intensive study, conducted [redacted] has provided agreed estimates relating to trade with Communist China.

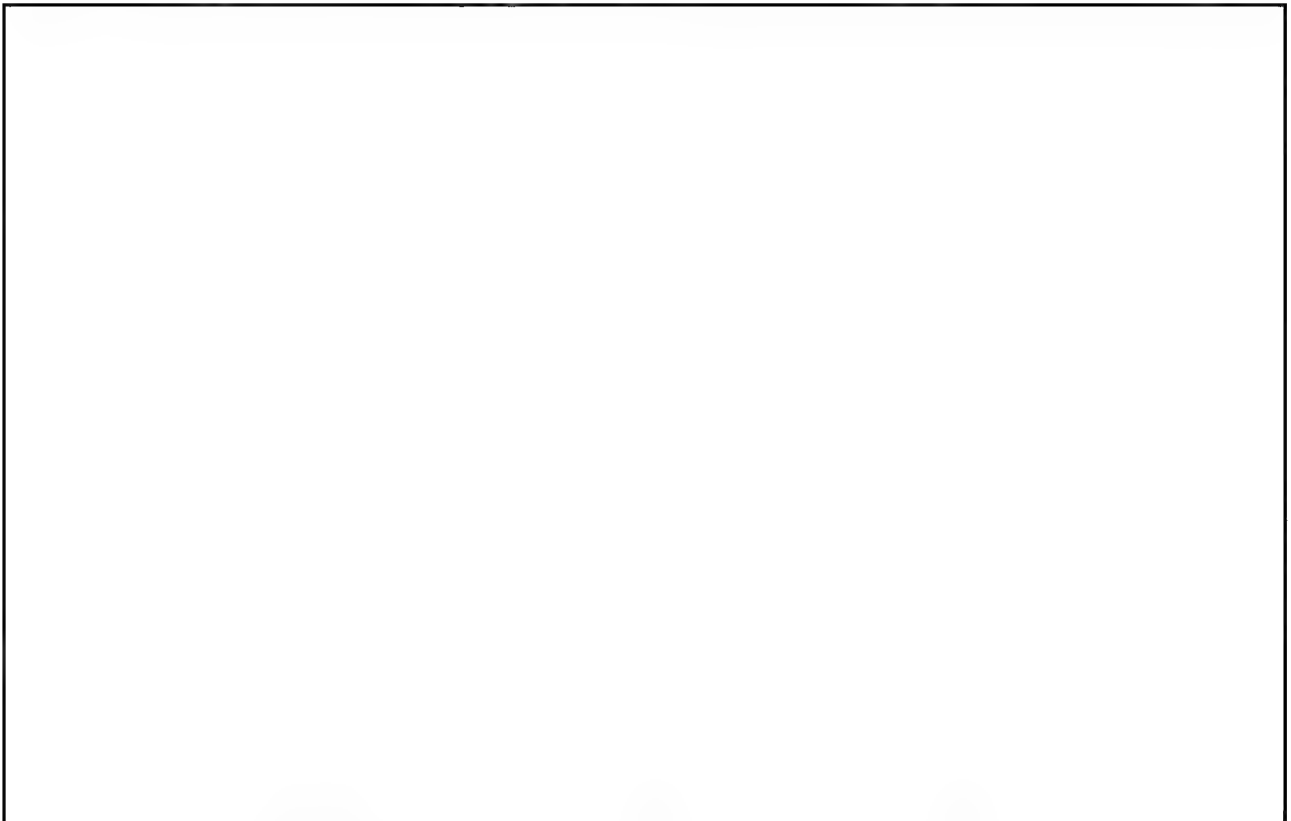


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6. Scientific and Technical Intelligence

a. Through intensified research our understanding of Soviet basic scientific capabilities and scientific manpower has improved. Successful application of new collection techniques and improved analytical processes, now in part under development and being implemented, will be required for substantial improvement in scientific and technological intelligence.

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c. Guided Missiles. Preparation of the first national intelligence estimate on guided missiles revealed critical gaps in our knowledge. Recent action reemphasizing the position of this field within the highest priority category of national intelligence objectives

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has resulted in increasing the effort on the collection and analysis of information. Considerable effort is being devoted to scientific techniques for collecting guided missile intelligence information; although many of these techniques are in the study phase, some are being implemented with promising results. To foster further improvements, the IAC has established an ad hoc committee to survey and evaluate the status of the nation's guided missile intelligence effort on the Sino-Soviet Bloc. The National Security Agency will assist in this survey. In the light of limited, but perhaps significant information recently acquired, we have undertaken a review of the national estimate, completed last fall, of the Soviet guided missile program.

d. Biological Warfare. Based on the experience gained in producing the first community-wide estimate in this field, a joint study of critical deficiencies in biological warfare intelligence and means for their elimination was completed in April. Positive evidence of the nature of the Soviet BW program has yet to be obtained.

e. Electronics. Our estimates, made as additional information is received, show an increase in Soviet electronics capabili-

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f. Meteorological Intelligence. A survey of critical deficiencies in meteorological intelligence on the Sino-Soviet Bloc is under review by an IAC ad hoc subcommittee.

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### C. COLLECTION

#### 1. The Foreign Service

a. Reporting from and collection by the Foreign Service, an extensive source of overt intelligence data, continued generally to meet expectations and was somewhat more responsive to intelligence needs, notably in the biographic field. Further improvement is expected during the coming year.

b. Although Foreign Service reporting from the Sino-Soviet Bloc on political matters continues to be inadequate for intelligence needs, some improvement is noted and further improvement expected. US missions in Bloc countries are now more aware of intelligence needs, and the strengthening of staffs at some posts has produced expanded coverage. In particular, increased emphasis is being given to coordinated support of economic and agricultural collection activities by more intensive briefing of personnel going to Bloc posts and by better substantive guidance. Information of all kinds on Albania and Bulgaria, where the US has no foreign service posts, remains insufficient to cover minimum needs; the irregular and delayed receipt of Bulgarian and Albanian publications has contributed to the deficiency.

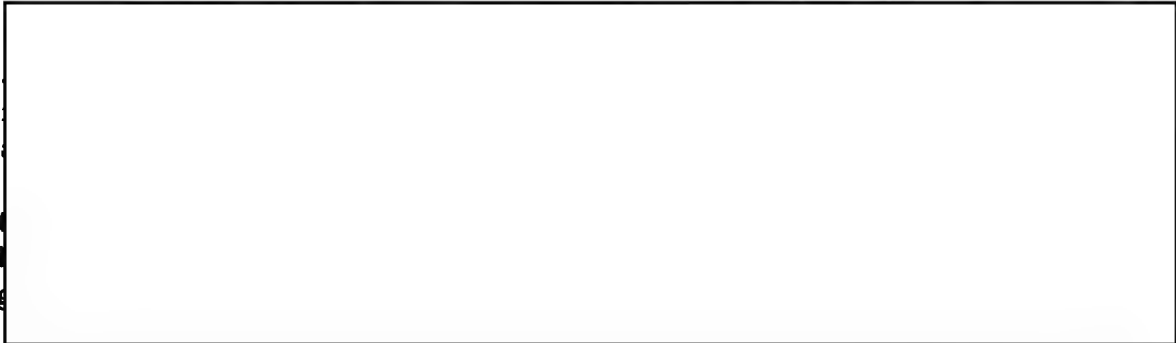
c. Reporting and analysis by Foreign Service posts in the Free World have also shown some improvement, although weaknesses continue to exist. More information in the sociological field is needed. Recent instructions to the field recommending methods for more systematic inter-agency coordination at the posts should help to improve intelligence collection. The intake of political and economic information on North Vietnam and on Korea, especially North Korea, is notably inadequate. The phasing-out of FOA (ICA) activities in certain areas may reduce the flow of economic information to a degree requiring some personnel realignments.

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d. Outside the Sino-Soviet Bloc, map procurement has been satisfactory except in northwestern Europe and in Latin America, where no Geographic Attaches are currently assigned. Peripheral procurement of maps on the Bloc has provided a limited number of maps on this area.



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1/ Bolivia, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Haiti.

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3. Overseas Commands

a. Evacuation of US forces from Austria will deprive the military services of a base from which a significant part of current intelligence on Soviet forces has been obtained. It will also decrease our capability for receiving intelligence on imminence of hostilities, since one point of direct contact with Soviet forces will be lost. Intelligence operations against Soviet forces in Southern Europe will be mounted mainly from Europe.

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4. Aerial Reconnaissance

a. Navy and Air Force aerial reconnaissance operations continue to be performed within the framework of policy guidance furnished to operating agencies. The value and capability of this means of gathering intelligence information is recognized, and collection operations are vigorously pursued. For example, the Air Force averages more than one thousand aerial reconnaissance flights annually in regions peripheral to the Communist Bloc. Useful data related to Communist Bloc capabilities, techniques of operation, order of battle, military and industrial developments, and installation changes are being obtained in peripheral regions.

b. Recognition of the growing potential of the peacetime employment of aerial reconnaissance has resulted in an invigorated research and development program.

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d. In a related activity, teams using cameras with 100-inch focal length lens recently developed by the Army have produced ground photography of considerable intelligence value along the Bulgarian-Greek border and on Quemoy Island. As equipment becomes available additional teams will be deployed along the Bloc border.

5. Exploitation of Defectors

In recent months the flow of defectors has been normal in numbers but outstanding or specialized sources have been relatively few as compared with the past year.

6. Programs in Electronics

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b. ELINT (Non-Communications Electronic Intercept).  
New and significant information on Soviet equipment and systems, [redacted] has resulted from ELINT collection activities. The national ELINT program was considered by the NSC, and NSCID-17 now provides the basic framework for this processing effort; much remains to be done before a satisfactory, integrated effort is achieved. We have made

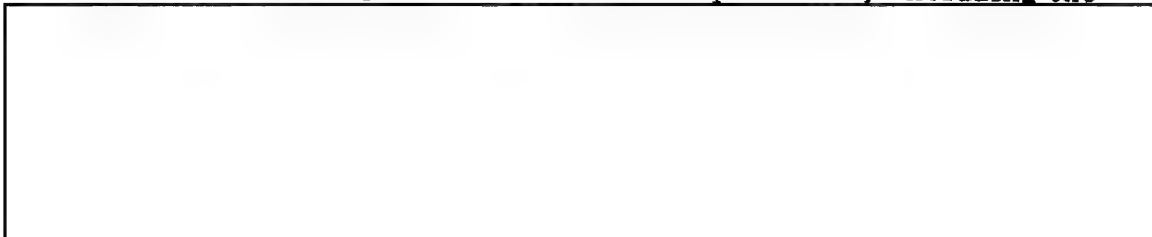
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progress in building ELINT collection capabilities, including the



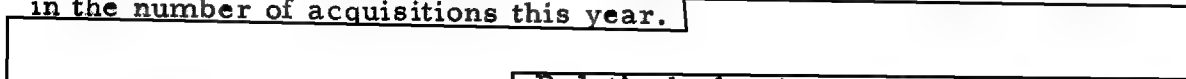
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8. Foreign Materials and Equipment

The procurement of important non-military items produced in the Soviet Bloc has continued to improve, showing a 20% increase in the number of acquisitions this year.

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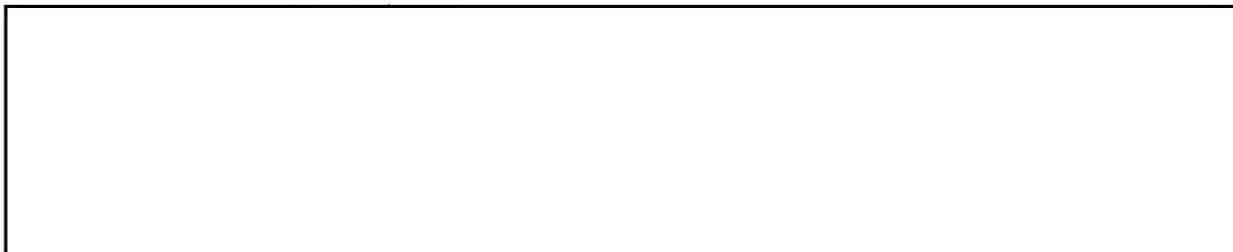


Relatively few items of Soviet military equipment have been acquired. The last major acquisition of

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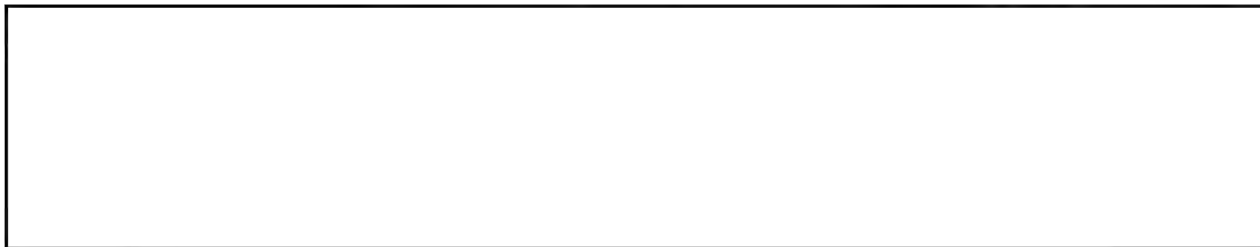
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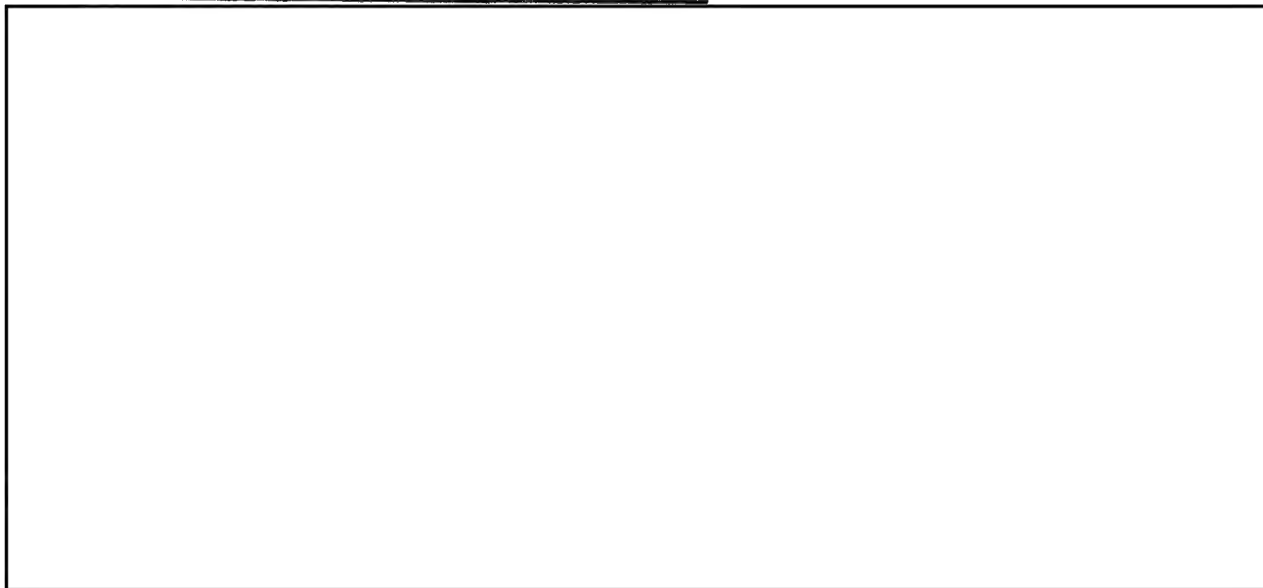


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11. Clandestine Collection Program



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c. DCID 5/1, "Coordination of the Foreign Clandestine Collection Activities of the Armed Services with those of the Central Intelligence Agency," was approved by the IAC on 11 January 1955. In accordance with the provisions of this Directive, a systematic review and adjustment, where necessary, of going operations has been undertaken. Little progress has been made to date.

d. In the past year, CIA and the service intelligence organizations have launched a series of clandestine operations and made arrangements under DCID 5/1 for new clandestine efforts. Surveys are being conducted for the purpose of developing further operations.

12. Coordination of Information Processing

An IAC ad hoc committee on information processing is at work on the increasingly complex problem of handling data within the intelligence community. The committee is now studying existing systems. It will next make studies and recommendations concerning such matters as a common classification scheme; uniform publishing, processing and dissemination procedures; and efficiency of storage and retrieval of intelligence information.

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**INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** The Intelligence Advisory Committee  
The Chairmen, IAC Subcommittees  
Deputy Director/Plans/CIA


**SUBJECT** : Recall or Destruction of the Preliminary  
Drafts of the Annual Report to the NSC on  
the Status of the Foreign Intelligence Program  
as of 30 June 1955

1. At its meeting on 16 August 1955, the DCI directed that all copies of the preliminary drafts of the Annual Report to the NSC on the Status of the Foreign Intelligence Program as of 30 June 1955 either be recalled or destroyed.

2. Accordingly, would you either return to the Office of National Estimates, or destroy, copies of the following drafts in your possession which are not required for record purposes:

IAC-D-55/9.2, 26 July 1955  
IAC-D-55/9.3, 2 August 1955  
IAC-D-55/9.4, 12 August 1955

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Secretary

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